

# FOG <sup>1</sup>

By DANA BURNET

*From McBride's Magazine*

I HAD come out of the city, where story-telling is a manufactured science, to the country where story-telling is a by-product of life. Mr. Siles had arrived to paint my piazza, as per a roundabout agreement between my cook, my cook's cousin, my cook's cousin's wife, who had been a Miss Siles, and finally — Mr. Siles himself. If that sentence is somewhat involved, so was my contract with Mr. Siles. In the country, a semicircle is the shortest line between two points.

I came at the strange story of Wessel's Andy in something of the same circuitous manner. Mr. Siles, as I have said, had arrived to paint my piazza; but after a long look at the heavens and the heaving sea, he opined that it would be a wet day and that the painting had best be left till to-morrow. I demurred. I was acquainted with the to-morrows of this drowsy Maine village. But while we were arguing the point, a white ghost began to roll in from the deep.

"Fog," said Mr. Siles.

"Yes," I admitted grudgingly.

He stared into the thickening mists with an expression that puzzled me. I have seen the same look upon the face of a child compelled to face the dark alone.

"I mistrust it," said Mr. Siles, simply.

"Mistrust the fog?"

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1916, by Robert M. McBride & Co. Copyright, 1917, by Dana Burnet.

He nodded, his iron-gray beard quivering with the intensity of the assent.

"Take it in a gale of wind," he said, "that's honest weather, though it blows a man's soul to Kingdom Come. But fog —"

"I suppose strange things do happen in it," I replied. It was a chance shot, but it struck home.

"Strange!" cried Mr. Siles. "You may well say strange! There was somethin' happened right here in this village —"

I settled myself comfortably against the naked piazza railing, and Mr. Siles told me this story.

He was born a thousand miles from deep water. His folks were small farmers in a middle western grain state, and he was due to inherit the farm. But almost before he could talk they knew he was a queer one. They knew he was no more farmer than he was college professor. He was a land hater from the beginnin'. He hated the look and the feel and the smell of it. He told me afterward that turnin' a furrow with a plow set his teeth on edge like when you scrape your finger nail along a piece of silk. His name was Andy.

When he was about thirteen year' old he found a picture of a ship in a newspaper. It was like a glimpse of another world. He cut it out and pasted it on the attic wall over his bed. He used to look at it a hundred times a day. He used to get up in the middle of the night, and light a match and look at it. Got so, Andy's father came up early one mornin' with a can o' whitewash and blotted the whole thing out against the wall. The boy did n't say a word until the ship was gone. Then he laughed, a crazy sort o' laugh.

"That's the way they go," he says, "right into the fog," he says, "and never come out again!"

He was sick after that. Some sort of a fever. I guess it made him a little delirious. He told me he was afraid they were goin' to blot him out, same as the picture. Used

to dream he was smotherin' to death, and pleasant things like that. Queer, too. . . .

When the fever finally burned out of him, he was nothin' but skin and bones. His people saw he was too sickly to work, so they let him mope around by himself. He used to spend most of his time in the woodshed, whittlin' pine models o' that whitewashed schooner. He was known all through those parts as Wessel's Andy, Wessel bein' his fam'ly name. See for yourself what Wessel's Andy meant. It did n't mean Andrew Wessel, by the grace o' God free, white and twenty-one. It meant "that good-for-nothin', brain-cracked boy over to Wessel's." That's what it amounted to in plain words.

But the strange thing about that name was how it followed him. It came east a thousand miles, and there was n't a town but it crawled into, on its belly, like a snake into long grass. And it poisoned each place for him, so that he kept movin' on, movin' on, always toward deep water. It used to puzzle him how strangers knew to call his name hindside foremost. 'T wan't any puzzle to me. He had n't been in my place two minutes askin' for a job, but I say "What's your name?" And he says, starin' hard at the model of the *Lucky Star* schooner that hung over my counter, "I'm Wessel's Andy," he says, never takin' his eyes off the schooner. Likely he'd done the same absent-minded trick all along the road, though not for just that reason.

I rec'llect the evenin' he came into my place. I was keepin' a ship's supply store in those days — fittin's and supplies, down by the Old Wharf. He shuffled in toward sundown, his belongin's done up in a handkerchief, his clothes covered half an inch thick with dust.

"I want a job," says he.

"What kind of a job?" says I.

"Oh, anything," says he.

"All right," I told him, "you can start in here to-morrow. I been lookin' for somebody to help around the

store." Then I asked him his name and he answered "Wessel's Andy." Some of the boys was standin' 'round and heard him say it. He was never called anything but Wessel's Andy from that time on.

Quietest young fellow ever I saw.—plenty willin' to work, but not very strong. I paid him four dollars a week and let him bunk in with me at the back o' the store. He could have made more money some'ers else, but he would n't go. Naturally there were a good many seafarin' men in and out o' the shop, and some evenin's they used to sit around yarnin' to one another. Often I've seen Wessel's Andy hunched up on a soap box behind the counter, his eyes burnin' and blinkin' at the model of the *Lucky Star* on the opposite wall, his head bent to catch the boys' stories. Seemed as if he could n't get enough o' ships and the sea.

And yet he was afraid to go, himself. I found that out one night when we were lockin' up after the boys had gone.

"Have you ever felt yourself to be a coward, Mr. Siles?" he says, in one of his queer fits o' talkin'.

"Why as for that," I says, "I guess I been pretty good and scared, a time or two."

"Oh, I don't mean that," he says. "I don't mean scared. I mean afraid—day and night, sleepin' and wakin'."

"No," I says, "and nobody else with good sense would be. Ain't nothin' in this world to frighten a man steady like that, unless it's his own sin."

Wessel's Andy shook his head, smilin' a little.

"Maybe not in this world," says he, white and quiet, "but how about—other worlds?"

"What you drivin' at?" says I. "You mean ghosts?"

"Not ghosts," he says, lowerin' his voice and lookin' out the side window to where the surf was pawin' the sand. "Just the feelin' o' ghosts."

"Come to bed," I says. "You've worked too hard to-day."



"No. Please let me tell you. Please sit up awhile. This is one of the times when I can talk."

He grabbed my hand and pulled me down to a chair. His fingers were as cold as ice. Then he dragged his soap box out from the counter and sat opposite me, a few feet away.

"I'll tell you how I know I'm a coward," he says. And he told me everything up to the time of his leavin' home.

"You see," he says, "I had to come. It was in me to come East. I've been four years workin' my way to open water, and I've had a hell of a time . . . a hell of a time. But it was in me to come. There has been a ship behind my eyes ever since I can remember. Wakin' or sleepin' I see that ship. It's a schooner, like the *Lucky Star* there, with all her tops'ls set and she's disappearin' in a fog. I know," he says, lookin' at me so strange and sad it sent the shivers down my back, "I know I belong aboard o' that ship."

"All right," I says, as though I didn't think anything of his queer talk, "all right, then go aboard of her. You'll find a hundred vessels up and down the coast that look like the *Lucky Star*. Not to a seafarin' man, maybe. But you're a farmer. You could n't tell one from t'other. Take your pick o' the lot," I says, "and go aboard of her like a man."

But he just smiled at me, a sickly sort o' smile.

"There's only one," he says, "there's only one, Mr. Siles. When she comes I'll go aboard of her, but I — won't — go — like — a — man!"

Then all at once he jumped up with a kind o' moanin' noise and stood shakin' like a leaf, starin' out the window to the sea.

"There," he says, kind o' chokin'. "There, I saw it then! Oh, God, I saw it then!"

I grabbed him by the shoulders and shook him.

"You saw what?" I says. "Tell me!"

His fingers dug into my arm like so many steel hooks.

"At the end of the Old Wharf. A sail! Look, don't you see it?"

I forced him down onto the soap box.

"Sit there," I says, "and don't be a fool. It's low tide," I says, "and there ain't enough water off the Old Wharf to float a dory."

"I saw it," he says, draggin' the words out slow as death, "I saw it, just as I always knew I would. That's what I came East for . . . a thousand miles. And I'm afraid to go aboard of her. I'm afraid, because I don't know what it's for."

He was rockin' himself back and forth like a crazy man, so I ran and got a drop o' whiskey from the back room.

"Here," I says. "Drink this."

He swallowed it straight, like so much water. In a few minutes he quieted. "Now then," I says, "you come to bed. This night's entertainment is over."

But it was n't. About midnight I woke up with the feelin' that somethin' was wrong. First thing I saw was the lamp burnin' high and bright. Next thing was Wessel's Andy, sittin' in his underclothes on the edge o' the bunk, my whiskey flask in his hands.

"Mr. Siles," says he, as straight and polite as a dancin' master, though his eyes burned, "I have made free with your whiskey. I have drunk it all, I think."

"Great Jehosophat," I says, "there was pretty nigh a quart in that flask!"

"I hope you don't begrudge it," says he, still smooth as wax, "because it has made me feel like a man, Mr. Siles, like a man. I could talk — and even laugh a little, I think. Usually I can only feel. Usually I am afraid. Afraid of what, Mr. Siles? Afraid of goin' aboard without knowin' what for. That's the fear to eat your heart out, Mr. Siles. That's the fear to freeze your blood. *The not knowin' what for!*"

I was wide awake by this time and wonderin' how I could get him back to bed. I did n't want to lay hands

on him any more than you'd want to lay hands on a person with nightmare. So I started to argy with him, like one friend to another. We were a queer lookin' pair, I'll warrant, sittin' there in our underclothes, facin' each other.

"Look here," I says, calm as a judge, "if it's your fate to ship aboard of a vessel, why don't you go peaceable and leave the reasons for it to God Almighty? Ain't anything holdin' you, is there?"

"There is somethin' holdin' me," he says; and then, very low: "What is it, Mr. Siles, that holds a man back from the sea?"

"Saints and skittles!" I says, jolted out o' my play-actin', "you ain't gone and fallen in love, have you?"

He did n't answer. Just sat there starin' at me, his face whiter than I ever saw a livin' man's face. Then all at once he turned his head, exactly as he would have done if a third person had walked into the room. He was gazin' straight at the lamp now. His eyes had a sort o' dazzled look.

"No," he says. "No, I won't tell that. It's—too—beautiful."

And before I could jump to catch him he pitched in a dead faint onto the floor.

It was two or three days before he was well enough to go to work again. Durin' that time he hardly spoke a word. But one afternoon he came to me.

"Mr. Siles," he said. "I'm queer, but I'm not crazy. You've been kind to me, and I wanted you to know it was n't that. There are people in this world," he said, "whose lives are n't laid down accordin' to the general rule. I'm one o' them."

And that's all he ever said about his actions the night he drank the whiskey.

It was a week or so later that Wessel's Andy heard the story o' Cap'n Salsbury and the *Lucky Star*. I suppose he was bound to hear it sooner or later, it bein' a fav'rite

yarn with the boys. But the way of his hearin' it was an accident, at that.

One afternoon, late, a fisherman from Gloucester put into the harbor. He had carried away some runnin' gear on his way to the Newf'n'land Banks and was stoppin' in port to refit. After supper the skipper came into the shop, where the boys was sittin' round as usual. First thing he saw was that model o' the *Lucky Star* on the wall.

"What has become o' Dan Salisbury?" says he, squintin' aloft. "What has become o' Dan Salisbury that used to go mackrelin' with the fleet?"

So they told him what had become o' Dan Salisbury, three or four o' them pitchin' in together. But finally it was left to old Jem Haskins to tell the story. In the first place, Jem had the longest wind and in the second place his cousin Allie used to keep house for Cap'n Dan. So Jem knew the ins and outs o' the story better than any o' the rest. As he began to talk, I saw Wessel's Andy pick up his soap box and creep closer. . . . And this is the story that he heard:

Cap'n Dan Salisbury was a deep-sea fisherman, owner and master o' the schooner *Lucky Star*. He had been born and raised in the village and was one of its fav'rite citizens. He was a fine, big man to look at, quiet and unassumin' in his ways and fair in his dealin', aship and ashore. If ever a man deserved to be happy, Dan Salisbury deserved it. But somehow happiness did n't come to him.

First his wife died. He laid her in a little plot o' ground on the hill back of his house, took his year-old girl baby aboard the *Lucky Star* and sailed for God knows where. He was gone ten months. Then he came back, opened his cottage on Salisbury Hill and set out to make little Hope Salisbury the richest girl in the village. He pretty nigh did it, too. His luck was supernat'ral. His catches were talked about up and down the coast. He became a rich man, accordin' to village standards.



Hope Salsbury grew up to be the prettiest girl in town. She was never very strong, takin' after her mother that way, and there was an air about her that kept folks at a distance. It was n't uppish or mean. She was as kind as an angel, and just about as far-away as one. There was n't a youngster in the village but would have died to have her, but she scared 'em speechless with her strange, quiet talk and her big misty eyes. Folks said Hope Salsbury would n't look at a man, and they were right. She looked straight *through* him.

It worried Cap'n Dan. He did n't want to get rid of Hope, by a long shot, but he knew he was failin' and he wanted to see her settled with a nice, dependable boy who could take care of her after he had gone. There was a man for every woman, said Cap'n Dan. But Hope did n't seem to find her man. She got quieter and quieter, and lonelier and lonelier, till the Cap'n decided somethin' was wrong somewhere. So he asked her straight out if there was anyone she wanted, anyone she cared enough about to marry. She said no, there was n't. But she said it so queer that the Cap'n began to suspect it was a case of the poor child lovin' somebody who did n't love her. It took him a long time to find the courage to ask that question. But when he did, she only smiled and shook her head.

"Hope," says the Cap'n, "there's only one thing in the world that makes a young girl wilt like you're wiltin', and that's love. Tell me what it is you want, and we'll go searchin' the seven seas till we find it."

"I don't know what it is myself," the girl answered. "It's as though I was in love with someone I had met long ago, and then lost."

"Lost can be found," says the Cap'n. "We'll go 'round the world in the *Lucky Star*."

Within a month's time the old schooner was overhauled and refitted and made ready for sea. It was June when she sailed out o' the harbor, but she had n't gone far enough to clear the Cape when a fog shut down and hid her from sight. Most of the village was standin' on

the wharf to wave good-bye. But they never saw the *Lucky Star* again. The fog lasted all day and all night and by mornin' o' the second day Cap'n Dan Salsbury and his daughter were a part o' the blue myst'ry across the horizon. They never came back. The *Lucky Star* was lost with all hands in the big blow off Hatteras two years ago this summer. . . . So little Hope Salsbury never found her man, and that branch o' the Salsbury family died, root, stock and branch.

As old Jem broke off, I glanced at Wessel's Andy. The boy was crouched forward on his soap box, his eyes burnin' like two coals in the shadow. When he saw me lookin' at him, he shrank back like a clam into its shell. That night, as we were undressin' in the back room, he turned to me all of a sudden.

"Mr. Siles," says he, "is there a picture o' Miss Hope Salsbury in this village?"

"Why," I answered, "I don't know as there is — and I don't know as there is n't. Come to think, I guess Cap'n Dan's cousin Ed Salsbury might have a likeness. He inherited most of the Cap'n's prop'ty. Probably find one in the fam'bly album."

"Which house is Ed Salsbury's?"

"Third to the right after you climb the Hill. You are n't thinkin' o' goin' up there to-night, are you?"

Wessel's Andy was kind o' smilin' to himself. He didn't answer my question. But he got into bed all right and proper, turned his face to the wall and was soon breathin' quiet and regular. I never suspected for a minute that he was shammin'.

It was just four o'clock in the mornin' when the telephone in the store began to ring — I looked at the clock as I jumped up to answer the call. I was on a party wire and my call was 13 — one long and three shorts. I had never thought about it bein' unlucky till that minute. But it struck me cold to hear that old bell borin' through the early mornin' silence . . .

"Hello," I says, takin' down the receiver.

"This is Ed Salsbury," says the other party. "Come up to my house right away and take your crazy clerk off my hands. I found him sittin' in the parlor when I came down to start the fires. Asked him what he was doin' and he said he had come to steal things. If you ain't up here in fifteen minutes I'll call the deputy sheriff."

I was up there in less than fifteen minutes. I cursed that fool boy every step of the way, but I went. I don't know why I took such trouble about him. Maybe I was a part o' that fate o' his.

Ed met me at the door of his cottage.

"Siles," says he, "there's somethin' queer about this. It's against nature. That boy—I've been talkin' to him—swears he came up here last night to steal. He pried open one o' the front windows and got into the parlor. That's enough to send him to jail for a good long bit, but I'm blessed if I want to send him. I've got a suspicion that the lad is lyin', though why any human should lie himself *into* the penitentiary instead of *out* of it, blamed if I know. You got any ideas on the subject?"

"What was he doin' when you found him?" says I.

"That was funny, too. He was sittin' at the table, with the lamp lit, as home-like as you please. And—"

"And what?"

"Lookin' at that old fam'ly album of ours."

"Ed," I says, "I'll go bond for that boy. Don't say anything about this down at the village. Some day I'll tell you why he came up here at dead o' night to peek into that old album of yours. It ain't quite clear in my own mind yet, but it's gettin' clearer."

"Queer how he looked at me when I came in the door," says Ed. "Just as though he was the one belonged here and I was the trespasser. His eyes—"

"I know," I said. "Where is the boy, Ed? I'll take him home now."

"He's in the kitchen," Ed answered, kind o' sheepish, "eatin' breakfast."

The Salsburys always were the biggest-hearted folk in the village.

So I took Wessel's Andy back to the store, but instead o' talkin' to him like I meant to, I never so much as opened my mouth the whole way home. I could n't. He looked too *happy*. It was the first time I'd seen him look anything but glum and peaked. Now, he was a changed man. There was a light on his face, and when I say light I mean *light*. Once he burst out laughin'—and it was n't the sort o' laugh that comes from thinkin' o' somethin' funny. It was just as though he'd seen some great trouble turned inside out and found it lined with joy. He made me think of a *bridegroom*, somehow, stridin' along there in the early dawn. . . .

I believe he would have gone straight on past the store, but for my hand on his arm. He followed me into the back room like a blind man, and there for the first time he spoke.

"I shan't work to-day," he says, drawin' a deep breath. Again I thought of a *bridegroom*.

"No," I says, "you'll go to bed and get some sleep."

"Yes," he says, "I must sleep." He began to peel off his clothes, and when I came back an hour later he was sleepin' like a baby, and smilin' . . .

He slept well into the afternoon. Then he got up, shaved, washed and put on the best clothes he owned. He did n't have only the one suit, but he brushed it till it looked like new. Instead o' the blue shirt that he wore around the shop he had on a white one with a standin' collar and a *white tie*. I found him standin' by the window in the back room, lookin' out to sea.

"Mr. Siles," he says, not turnin' round, "I am goin' to leave you."

"Leave?" I says.

"Yes."

"When you goin'?"

"Soon," he says. And then he faced me.

"That ship," he says, "that ship I told you about"—



he was speakin' slow and quiet—"it's comin' for me very soon. I shan't have to wait much longer now. I feel that it is near. And I am glad."

"I thought you didn't want to go?" I says, tryin' to get at the real meanin' of his words. I felt like a man in a dark room that's reachin' for somethin' he knows is there but can't quite locate.

"That was yesterday," he says, smilin' like he had smiled in his sleep. "To-day I'm glad. To-day I want to go. It's the natural thing to do, now. It's so natural—and good—that I don't mind talkin' about it any more. Sit down," he says, "and I'll tell you. You've been my friend, and you ought to know."

I sat down, feelin' kind o' weak in the knees. By this time it was beginning to grow dark. A slight mist was formin' on the water.

"I've already told you," he says, "about the ship that was always behind my eyes. There was somethin' else, Mr. Siles, somethin' I've never told a livin' soul. Ever since I was a little boy I've been seein' a face. It was a child's face to begin with, but it grew as I grew. It was like a beautiful flower, that changes but is always the same. At first I only dreamed it, but as I grew older I used to see it quite clearly, both day and night. I saw it more and more frequently, until lately"—he put his hand to his eyes—"it has become a livin' part o' me. It is a woman's face, Mr. Siles, and it calls me.

"Until last night I had never connected this face in any way with the ship in the fog. You see, one was the most beautiful thing in the world—the *only* beautiful thing in my world—and the other was horrible. But it called me, too, and I was afraid; afraid that I would have to go before I found *her*."

He leaned forward and put his hand on my knee.

"Mr. Siles," says he, in the voice of a man speakin' of his Bride, "I saw that face last night in Mr. Salsbury's old album. It was the face of Hope Salsbury."

I jumped up and away from him. My brain had been

warnin' me all along that something like this was comin', but it was a shock, just the same.

"She's dead," I says. "She's dead!"

It was the only thing I could think to say. My mouth was dry as a bone. Words would n't come to me.

"Oh, no," he cried, and his voice rang. "Oh, no, Mr. Siles. There's no such thing as bein' dead. There are more worlds than one," he says. "As many more as a man needs," he says. "This is only a poor breath of a world. There are others, others! I know," he says — and laughed — "I know how it is with men. They think because their eyes close and their mouths are still and their hearts stop beatin' that it's the end o' happiness. And maybe it is with some. I can't say. Maybe if folks are entirely happy in this world they don't need the others. But it's every man's right to be happy, Mr. Siles, and the Lord God knows His business. Trust Him, Mr. Siles, trust Him. Don't I know? I used to be afraid, but now I see how it is."

"Lord help me," I says. "What am I to do?"

"Why, nothin'," he says, patten' my knee. "It's all right, Mr. Siles. You go ahead with your life," he says, "the same as though I had never come into it. Take all the happiness you can get, Mr. Siles, for that's as God intended. But never think it ends here."

I could n't look at him. There was a blur before my eyes. I got up and went out o' the store, headin' down the beach. I wanted to be alone, to sit down quietly and *think*. My brain was spinnin' like a weathercock in a gale.

I must have blundered up the beach a good two miles before I noticed that the mist was thickenin'. I stopped dead still and watched it creep in, blottin' the blue water as it came. It was like the white sheet that a stage magician drops between him and the audience just before he does his great trick. I wondered what was goin' on behind it.

The sun was settin' behind Salisbury Hill. There was

a sort o' glow to the fog. It began to shine like a piece of old silver that has been rubbed with a rag. All at once I heard Wessel's Andy say, clear as a bell: "Mr. Siles, I am goin' to leave you!"

I turned toward home, walkin' fast. But somethin' kept pesterin' me to hurry, hurry! I began to run, but I could n't get ahead of the black fear that was drivin' me. I saw Wessel's Andy standin' at the window and lookin' out to sea. I heard him say: "It's comin' for me very soon." I ran till my heart pounded in my side . . .

The beach curved before me like the blade of a scythe, with the Old Wharf for the handle. The edge of it was glistenin' in the afterglow and the surf broke against it like grain against the knife. I was still half a mile from home when I saw a single figure walk out on that shinin' blade and stand with his arms folded, starin' into the fog. It was Wessel's Andy.

I tried to run faster, but the sand caught my feet. It was like tryin' to run in a dream. I called and shouted to him, but he did n't hear. All the shoutin' in the world would n't have stopped him then. Suddenly he threw out his arms and walked down into the water. I was so near by that time that I could see his face. It was like a lamp in the mist.

I called again, but he was in the surf now, and there were other voices in his ears. A wave broke over his shoulders. He struggled on, his hands kind o' gropin' ahead of him. I caught another glimpse of his face. He was smilin' . . .

I gathered myself to jump. I remember the foam on the sand and the water swirlin' underfoot and the new wave makin' and the fog over all. I remember thinkin' o' the strong tide, and how little a man looked in the sea . . .

And then I saw the *Lucky Star*.

I would have known her anywhere. She was just haulin' out o' the mist, on the starboard tack, with all

her canvas set. As I looked she melted in the fog — she that should have been lyin' fathoms deep — and after that I only saw her by glances. But I saw her plain. She was no color at all, and there was n't the sign of a light to mark her, but she came bow on through water that would n't have floated a dory, closer and closer until I could make out the people on her decks. They were like statues carved out o' haze. There was a great figure at the wheel, and others up for'ard, in smoky oilskins. And at the lee rail I saw a young girl leanin' against the shrouds, one hand to her heart, the other held out as though to tear aside the mist. . . .

I was in the water then, and it was cold. A wave picked me up and carried me forward. I saw Wessel's Andy flounderin' in the trough ahead o' me. I swam for him. My hand touched his shoulder. He twisted half about and looked at me. His hair was like matted seaweed over his eyes and his face was as pale as the dead. But again, in all that wildness, I thought of a *bridegroom* . . .

A great wave, with a cruel curved edge, lifted above us. I made ready to dive, but he flung his arms out and waited . . . I saw white bows ridin' on the crest of it, and the silver belly of a drawin' jib, and it seemed to me I heard a laugh! Then the wave hit me . . .

When I came to, I was lyin' on the beach with some o' the boys bendin' over me. They had heard me shoutin' and arrived just in time to pull me away from the tide. They never found *him*. They said it was because of the strong undertow. But I knew better. I knew that Wessel's Andy had gone aboard of his vessel at last, and that all was well with him.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr. Siles stopped abruptly and drew his hand across his eyes. I found myself staring at the gray wall of fog as though it had been the final curtain of a play. I longed for it to lift — if only for an instant — that I



might see the actors out of their parts. But the veil was not drawn aside.

Then I heard some one speaking monotonously of a piazza that would be painted on the morrow, and turning a moment later saw Mr. Siles just vanishing in the mist, a smoky figure solely inhabiting an intangible world.

I went into my house and closed the door.